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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0948
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1686
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3869
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1553
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2122
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2577
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000718

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, IIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: INTERNATIONAL AND STATE MEDIA HIGHLIGHT
ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER'S VISIT.

11. (U) SUMMARY: Assistant Secretary Boucher's May 27-30 visit to Turkmenistan received wide media coverage. International media gave positive coverage to Boucher's statements on both economic and human rights issues. State media focused on his remarks of economic progress and U.S. assistance to Turkmenistan. END SUMMARY.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES' COVERAGE OF BOUCHER'S VISIT

12. (U) The coverage from International news agencies of Assistant Secretary Boucher's visit was accurately reported and focused on remarks concerning economic and human rights issues. "Agence France Presse" (English), "Interfax" (Russian, English), "ITAR-TASS" (Russian) and "Xinhua" (Russian), "Reuters" (English), "ITAR-TASS" (Russian) and Azeri "Trend" news agency (Russian) accurately carried Boucher's remarks on the importance of diversified energy export routes and energy security. The "Reuters" and "Trend" news agencies' coverage also accurately carried Boucher's remarks on Turkmenistan's positive steps towards democratization and improving human rights, and included his statements on the need for greater media freedom. Both "Gorgan Voice" radio and Russian "Vremya Novosti" linked Boucher's visit and remarks to the progressive dialogue between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan on a Trans-Caspian pipeline.

STATE MEDIA HIGHLIGHT BOUCHER'S VISIT

13. (U) The May 28 "Watan" TV news program highlighted Boucher's meeting with President Berdimuhamedov and stressed the importance of diversifying bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, particularly in education, energy and regional issues. The broadcast hailed Boucher's remarks, emphasizing the readiness of the U.S. to support and assist reforms in the country. The news program gave a generally accurate and broad summary of Boucher's follow-up statements about the meeting. Similar reports the following day appeared on the front pages of the state-run dailies "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" (Russian, circ. 44,791) and "Turkmenistan" (Turkmen, circ. 29,091).

14. (U) On June 3, the state run TV channel "Turkmenistan" (Russian, Turkmen, English, Chinese, Arabian, Persian, and French) ran a special 13 minute video program of Boucher's visit. The program included clips from Boucher's meeting with students at Turkmen State University, a trip to the Annau Mosque and a press conference with

media representatives. The program accurately carried a summary of Boucher's introductory remarks from the press-conference as well as follow-up remarks from his meeting with the students.

15. (U) COMMENT: State Media's extensive and accurate coverage of U.S. delegations underscores the value THE Turkmenistan government places on such visits. Foreign media, particularly from Iran and occasionally from Russia, reflect continued suspicion over U.S motives in the region. END COMMENT.

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